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INFO RUEHZA/WHA CENTRAL AMERICAN COLLECTIVE
RUMIAGH/COMJTF-B SIMS SOTO CANO HO
RUEADAT/BUREAU OF ATF WASHDC
RHMFIUU/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUWDQAC/COMDT COGARD WASHINGTON DC
RHMFISS/DIRJIATF SOUTH
RUEABND/DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMIN HQ WASHINGTON DC

UNCLAS SAN JOSE 000063

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SENSITIVE
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DEPT FOR WHA/CEN, WHA/PPC AND INL/LP
SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR FPA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [SNAR](#) [CS](#)

SUBJECT: COSTA RICA FULLY SUPPORTS MERIDA INITIATIVE

REF: 07 SAN JOSE 2074 AND PREVIOUS (NOTAL)

¶1. (U) Despite the extremely short notice, the GOCR sent top technical and law enforcement officials to El Salvador to detail their security requirements at the January 17-18 SICA-sponsored Merida Initiative Validation Meeting. The professional and business-like delegation, led by Vice-Minister of the Presidency for Security Issues, Jose Torres, expertly explained their primary security challenges to the U.S. interagency-led meeting.

¶2. (U) The GOCR delegation gave detailed presentations on the state of their coast guard, police equipment and communications, strength of the rule of law and corruption, border/port/aviation security issues, arms trafficking within Costa Rica, and criminal information databases. VM Torres also explained in detail the serious security challenges facing Costa Rican law enforcement, including:

- The rise of organized crime (mostly drug-related);
- increased use of Costa Rica's territory and maritime routes for drug smuggling;
- sky-rocketing violent crime, with senior GOCR officials themselves being victims; and
- difficulties faced in border and port security issues.

¶3. (U) Closely echoing Post's security assessment in reftels, Coast Guard engineer Adrian Delgado accurately described the operational status of their fleet and validated their maritime security assistance needs. Costa Rican Drug Institute (ICD) Director Mauricio Boraschi gave a detailed status of several security reform bills that were under review in the national legislature. Judicial Police (OIJ) Criminal Investigation Chief Gustavo Mata-Vega and Fuerza Publica (FP) Subdirector Rigoberto Rodriguez listed police equipment and communications needs. The GOCR delegation as a whole highlighted the need for better truck, vehicle, and container scanning capabilities at their various ports of entry.

¶4. (U) The GOCR delegation reported to us that they were impressed with and encouraged by the Merida Initiative proposal and indicated that, if approved, it would significantly upgrade Costa Rica's ability to combat narcotrafficking and contribute to regional security in Central America.

15. (U) GOCR participants:

- Vice-Minister Jose Torres
- Costa Rican Drug Institute (ONDCP equivalent) Director Mauricio Boraschi
- Costa Rican Coast Guard Engineer Adrian Delgado
- Criminal Investigation Chief for the Judicial Police Gustavo Mata-Vega
- Fuerza Publica (regular police) Subdirector Rigoberto Rodriguez

16. (SBU) COMMENT: The GOCR's security apparatus, as highlighted by their positive role in this conference, is under new management. They are energetic, professional, and active participants in our joint CN efforts, and increasingly willing to support regional initiatives. Since the Arias administration came to power in May 2006, the GOCR, with some USG assistance, has seized over 55 tons of cocaine, a record amount. Now is the time to deepen our security relationship with Costa Rica, especially in the critical INL-supported portion of our CN program. The Ticos are willing to play; some tangible USG assistance will strengthen our bilateral relationship, enhance regional security, and increase drug interdiction in this strategic crossroads of narcotrafficking.
BRENNAN